



Remember . . .

- **Brush and floss your teeth every day**
- **See a dentist regularly**
- **Limit snacks between meals**

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Healthy Teeth

For You and Your Baby



A guide for expecting and new mothers

**Bringing healthy smiles
to all Alabama children!**

Your doctor wants the best care for you and your baby. An important part of your health is your own oral health. There are many things that you can do to improve your oral health and to make sure your baby has healthy teeth and gums.

Before your baby is born

- Pregnancy and the first year of your baby's life are very special. Take good care of yourself so your baby will be off to a healthy start.
- The most important thing you can do for you and your baby is to take care of your health and follow the advice of your doctor while you are pregnant.
- Your oral health can affect the overall health of your baby since you share blood with your baby. Brushing and flossing your teeth every day are the most important things you can do for your oral health. Chewing gum with Xylitol can also help prevent cavities. If you have problems with your teeth or gums, see a dentist because cavity germs can be passed from you to your baby!
- Your baby's teeth begin to develop between the third and sixth month of pregnancy, so it is important that you receive enough nutrients — especially calcium, protein, phosphorous and vitamins A, C, and D. Limit soft drinks, sweets and junk food because they can cause cavities.



When your baby is born

- After you feed your baby, you should clean your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth or a gauze pad.
- Be careful not to put your baby to bed with a bottle because this may cause cavities, pain, tooth loss, infections, and loss of sleep.
- Ask your baby's doctor if fluoride drops are needed.
- It is okay for your baby to use a pacifier, but don't dip it in sugar, honey, or anything sweet. Never put it in your mouth.
- Never put any item from your mouth into your baby's mouth.

Taking care of baby's teeth

- Your baby's first teeth are very important! They help your child chew food and talk right.
- When your baby is between 6-12 months, he or she should begin using a sippy cup.
- Wean baby from bottle by 12-14 months.
- Clean your baby's teeth with a soft toothbrush every day after he or she eats.
- Set up a dental checkup after your baby turns one year old or sooner if there are problems.